

## **Dr. Brewer, one of Fairbury's Early Doctors**

By: Dale C. Maley

Dr. Dan Brewer served two generations of Fairbury citizens from 1876 until he died in 1933. The story of Dr. Brewer involves three different families because he was married twice. The story began with the birth of his father, Sylvester Brewer, in Vermont in 1805.

Sylvester Brewer married Elizabeth Armstrong in 1825 in Vermont. Sylvester was 21, and Elizabeth was 20 years of age. They had four children. Unfortunately, Elizabeth died in 1839 at the age of 33. Sylvester Brewer moved to Trumbull County, Ohio. In 1843, he married Miss Sarah Hake. Sylvester and Sarah Brewer had eight children. In 1845, the Sylvester Brewer family moved to Jefferson, Wisconsin. Jefferson is about halfway between Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin.

Another family involved in the Dr. Brewer family story was the George W. Rogers family in Ohio. In 1843, George Rogers married Ruth Brecount. George was 22, and Ruth was 24 when they married. George and Ruth Rogers had three boys and three girls.

Also, in 1843, Sylvester Brewer and his second wife, Sarah Hake, had a son they named Daniel B. Brewer in Warren, Ohio. In his later life, Daniel Brewer was referred to as either "Dan" or "Dann" Brewer.

In the 1850 Census, George and Ruth Rogers lived in Mill Creek, Ohio, with three of their children. George was a carpenter by occupation. Between 1850 and 1859, the George Rogers family moved from Ohio to Tazewell County in Illinois. George and Ruth Rogers had a daughter in 1855 named Charlotte "Lottie" Jean Rogers.

The 1850 Census also showed the Sylvester and Sarah Brewer family had moved to Jefferson, Wisconsin. Six-year-old Dan Brewer was among the five children living at home.

Unfortunately, George W. Rogers died in Tazewell County in 1859 when he was only 36. His wife Ruth was 40 years old and had to raise their six children. In the 1860 Census, Ruth Rogers lived in Washington, Illinois, and her occupation was a housekeeper. Ruth provided for the five of her children living at home.

In 1867, Dan Brewer married Rosetta Clarisa Smith in Wisconsin. Dan was 24, and Rosetta was 17 when they married. They had no children. Dan Brewer taught school and became the principal of the Waukesha Reform School. In his spare time, Dan studied medicine. In the 1870 Census, Dan lived with his wife Rosetta in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. He listed his occupation as a fire and life insurance agent.

The 1870 Census also reported that the widow Ruth Rogers had moved back to Springfield, Ohio. Her 81-year-old mother, Lorena Brecount, lived in the household. Four of Ruth's children were living at home. Daughter Lottie Rogers was 17.

In 1873, Dan Brewer entered the Bennett Medical College in Chicago. In 1875, Dan took a course at the Hahnemann College in Chicago and attended clinical lectures at Cook County Hospital. Dan graduated with first honors in the spring of 1876 and began his practice at Fairbury. Sometime between 1870 and 1880, Dan Brewer and his first wife divorced.

Around 1873, Lottie Rogers attended the Western Female University in Oxford, Ohio. Incredibly, Lottie was able to go to college, given that she was raised in a single-parent household.

The 1880 Census found that the first wife of Dr. Brewer was divorced, and she reverted to her maiden name of Rosette Smith. She lived with her parents in Fort Atkinson and worked in a dressmaking shop.

The 1880 Census also found the widow Ruth Rogers lived on Walnut Street in Fairbury with three of her children. This same Census reported that Dr. Dan Brewer was a 37-year-old divorced medical doctor living on Walnut Street in Fairbury.

In 1882, Dr. Brewer married Miss Lottie Rogers on May 10, 1882. He was 39, and Lottie was 29 when they married. It was noted that Mrs. Brewer was a lady of fine literary attainments because she was a disciple of the Western Female University and a graduate of the Chautauqua Literary Society.

In 1889, Dr. Brewer and his wife Lottie had a daughter they named Bethel Ruth Brewer. Bethel grew up on Elm Street in Fairbury and graduated with the high school class of 1907. Her class had a total of 13 graduates.

In 1910, Andrew Bertrume Claudon II married Bethel Brewer in Fairbury. Both A. B. Claudon II and Bethel were 21 years old when they married. A. B. Claudon was the son of A. B. Claudon Sr., a prominent banker in Fairbury. A. B. Claudon Sr. built his bank at the northeast corner of Fourth and Locust Streets. Today, this building is the Lost in Time restaurant.

In 1915, A. B. Claudon II and his wife Bethel had a son they named Dann Brewer Claudon in Fairbury. The decade between 1915 and 1925 was very good for Dr. Dan Brewer and his wife, Lottie. Their only child, Lottie Brewer, had married the young and successful banker, A. B. Claudon II. Dan and Lottie Brewer also enjoyed watching their only grandchild, Dann B. Claudon, grow up in Fairbury.

The good times for Dr. Brewer and his wife ended in 1926 when their only child, Bethel Brewer-Claudon, died at age 37 in Fairbury. A. B. Claudon II became a widower and had to raise his ten-year-old son Dann B. Claudon.

Unfortunately, the bad times continued in 1927 for the Dr. Brewer family. A. B. Claudon II attended a Monday night business meeting in Peoria with some bankers. The following Tuesday morning, 11-year-old son Dann B. Claudon found his father unresponsive in a

chair. Doctors determined that A. B. Claudon II had been poisoned and was in a coma for five days. A. B. Claudon then came out of the coma and seemed to be recovering for one day. Then A. B. Claudon died at the age of 38. Claudon Bank closed during his illness and never opened again. Auditors found that A. B. Claudon had done some illegal activities, including issuing fictitious loans to customers. The Coroner's Jury ruled that his death was due to an unknown poisonous drug administered to him by an unknown person.

Dr. Brewer then became the guardian of his grandson, Dann B. Claudon, and raised him in his Elm Street house. Dr. Brewer continued to practice medicine in Fairbury until he died in 1933 at the age of 90. Lottie Brewer, the wife of Dr. Brewer, died in 1946 at the age of 93. Dr. Brewer and his wife, Lottie, are buried in Graceland Cemetery.

Dann B. Claudon went on to be a successful medical doctor in Wisconsin. He died in 2002 at the age of 86 in Thiensville, Wisconsin.

Dr. Brewer played an essential role in early Fairbury history. He provided medical services to two generations of Fairbury citizens until he died in 1933.



Dr. Daniel Brewer practiced medicine in Fairbury from 1876 until his death in 1933.